



THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO PROGRAM

Working with Women, Children, and Families to End Pediatric AIDS

ELIZABETH GLASER PEDIATRIC AIDS FOUNDATION IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

The Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation (EGPAF) began supporting critical HIV and AIDS services in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in 2001, providing funding and technical assistance to prevention of mother-to-child HIV transmission (PMTCT) programs implemented by the Kinshasa School of Public Health and the University of North Carolina. Since then, EGPAF has implemented and scaled up access to HIV testing and counseling; early infant HIV diagnosis (EID); adult and pediatric HIV care and treatment; TB prevention and treatment; sexually transmitted infection management; sexual and gender-based violence services; family planning; and services for orphans and vulnerable children.

EGPAF has worked in close collaboration with DRC’s Ministry of Health, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the U.S. Department of Defense, and the U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). With our partners, we aim to increase coverage of PMTCT and TB and HIV care and treatment services, while strengthening community health facility linkages, and building local ownership and sustainability of comprehensive health programs.

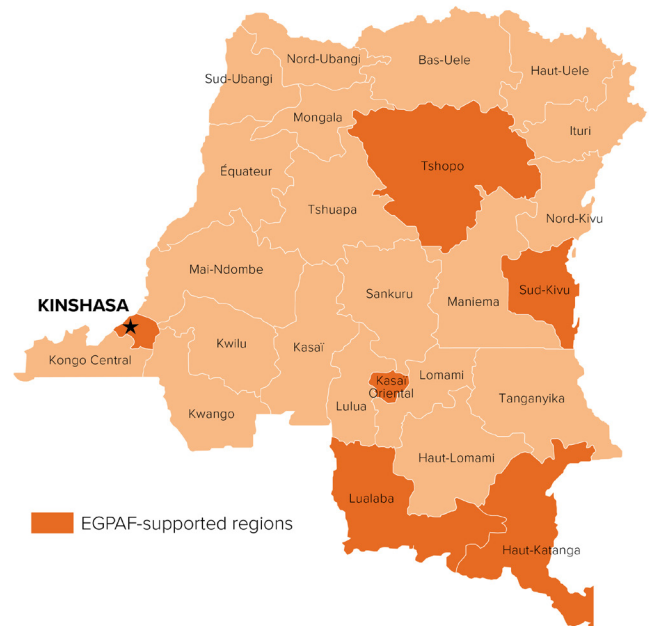
KEY PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS*

In fiscal year 2022, EGPAF in DRC*	
	Tested 156,894 clients for HIV, of whom 12,029 were identified positive (8%)
	Enrolled 12,631 new clients on ART, including 340 pregnant women
	Provided ART to 53,243 clients
	Performed 38,222 viral load tests. 94% of EGPAF clients are virally suppressed
	Enrolled 3,036 clients on PrEP

COUNTRY PROFILE**

Population	92,377,986
Number of people living with HIV	540,000
HIV prevalence rate among adults (15–49 years of age)	0.7%
Deaths due to AIDS	14,000
Women 15 years and over living with HIV	300,000
Children (0–14 years of age) living with HIV	63,000
ART coverage for adults 15 years and over	88%
ART coverage for children 14 and younger	38%
Clients with HIV who developed TB	22,000
Estimated TB-related deaths among people living with HIV	7,500
Children ages 0–17 orphaned due to AIDS	540,000

CURRENT EGPAF IN DRC PROGRAM GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE



* Results do not include EGPAF’s contributions as a subawardee under the Lisanga Project

** Sources: Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS (2021) <https://www.unaids.org/en/regionscountries/countries/democraticrepublicofthecongo>
World Bank, Democratic Republic of the Congo, population estimates (2021) <https://data.worldbank.org/country/CD>
Stop TB Partnership, Tuberculosis Situation in 2020 https://www.stoptb.org/static_pages/COD_Dashboard.html

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Integrated HIV/AIDS Project-Kinshasa (2017–2024)

The Integrated HIV/AIDS Project (IHAP)-Kinshasa is a major USAID-funded HIV/AIDS program. Its mission is to improve service delivery and provide technical assistance to the Government of DRC and specific health zones in Kinshasa. IHAP-Kinshasa will scale up HIV/AIDS services, including comprehensive prevention, HIV testing, antiretroviral therapy (ART) enrollment, and treatment retention support services at high-yield entry points throughout these health zones. EGPAF focuses on community engagement to increase demand for HIV and AIDS services. The project also works to address TB/HIV co-infection through increased access to TB testing and prevention services, and promotes efficient laboratory functions for more readily accessible diagnostic services for HIV/AIDS and TB. This work is sustained by building and reinforcing the capacity of staff at the health zones, Ministry of Health, and the National AIDS Control Program.

The Lisanga Project (2021–2026)

As a subawardee to the Kinshasa School of Public Health, EGPAF works in collaboration with the government of DRC to scale up effective strategies to accelerate progress along the HIV service delivery cascade in Kinshasa. The aim of the project is to build on existing CDC programs to achieve and maintain epidemic control by 2030 through high-quality comprehensive HIV and AIDS prevention, care, and treatment.

Elikya-Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo (Elikya-FARDC) (2022–2026)

EGPAF is a partner in the Department of Defense HIV/AIDS Prevention Project: Military Specific HIV/AIDS Prevention, Care, and Treatment Program for PEPFAR-funded countries. The project, locally known as Elikya-FARDC, aims to reduce the number of new HIV infections and other sexually transmitted infections among members of the FARDC, their families, and the civilian communities served by FARDC health services. The project also supports the continuum of care and treatment for those living with HIV/AIDS.

ADVOCACY

As an implementing partner to DRC's Ministry of Health, EGPAF provides targeted technical assistance to the National AIDS Control Program and the National TB Control Program. EGPAF is supporting and facilitating discussion and adoption of the new World Health Organization treatment recommendations through its continued support to the pediatric and adult care and treatment technical working groups. EGPAF is also focused on supporting the roll-out of new pediatric TB detection technologies and child-friendly treatments. As part of its community outreach, EGPAF is focused on working with religious leaders and health zone staff to promote the uptake of prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) and HIV testing, care, and treatment. Our work in this area also enables orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs) to attend school and receive vocational training, in addition to HIV testing and treatment services, while furthering policy development for OVC care. EGPAF is also contributing to the strengthening of civil society organizations (CSOs) and communities' capacities to advocate for childhood TB at national and local levels. EGPAF provides small grants to CSOs to facilitate community-led advocacy and demand creation for national TB policy reforms for the implementation and scale up of pediatric TB care, including screening, diagnostic services, adherence support, treatment of active TB, and TB preventive therapy.

RESEARCH

The pediatric-focused accelerated case-finding effort (PACE), launched under the IHAP-Kinshasa project in March 2020, improved case finding in CLHIV by line listing pediatric index clients to identify and test them for HIV. The PACE Evaluation (2020–22) aimed to describe the process for index testing and diagnosing children <15 years with HIV and to identify gaps in the cascade (including those related to COVID-19). The evaluation found that the facility and community providers perceived significant improvements to pediatric case finding after the introduction of changes under PACE. These included greater emphasis on documentation of all biological children of ART clients, pediatric-specific case-finding training for providers, and provision of transport fare to conduct outreach in communities, which improved line listing practices. However, there were still gaps identified with pediatric case finding, including insufficient transport fare and non-disclosure among parents acting as a barrier to outreach and testing acceptance for their children.

To learn more about EGPAF's work in DRC, and to access program resources and publications developed by the team, please visit

<https://www.pedaids.org/country/democratic-republic-congo/>

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